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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 002352

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: DEC. 30 DRC UPDATE

Classified By: Poloff Meghan Moore for Reasons 1.4 B and D

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Although the area north of Kanyabayonga has quieted and humanitarian relief efforts are underway, troubling fighting and troop movements continue in parts of North Kivu that used to be under RCD/G control. End Summary.

Tension High in Goma

¶2. (C) On December 30, an international human rights worker told poloff that over the past month, ethnic tension in Goma has become increasingly noticeable. She opined that an increase in ethnic tension combined with ongoing arming of Rwandophone civilians in Masisi, continuous reports of small-scale fighting between ex-ANC elements and the FARDC, and the fact that Governor Serufuli increasingly behaves like a "local dictator instead of a state employee" are troubling. A MONUC poloff said that the situation "wasn't looking good" and said it appears that both sides may be preparing for a more serious confrontation. During the week of December 27, Congolese sources in North Kivu told political assistants they were concerned that serious fighting in North Kivu would resume.

North-South Kivu Border

¶3. (C) On December 30, a MONUC officer reported that Kivu Brigade Commander General Isberg met with North Kivu military regional commander BG Amisi on December 29. Amisi reportedly told Isberg that he was concerned with the situation near Minova (northern South Kivu), said President Kabila had told him to deploy a "neutral" company to Kalehe (southern North Kivu), and claimed that Governor Serufuli was directing the situation and was trying to encourage discord between the North and South Kivu military regions. On December 30, an international NGO worker in Goma told poloff that in the past few weeks up to 20,000 civilians had been displaced from Bweramana (on the border of North and South Kivu, between Kalehe and Minova) towards Minova. Generals Isberg, Mabe and Amisi were scheduled to meet in Minova on December 30.

Walikale Territory

¶4. (C) On December 29, BG Amisi reportedly told Isberg that he had heard that four ex-ANC (RCD/G military wing)battalions planned to advance towards Walikale along three axes, with the first advance along the Ntoto axis already under way. Amisi reportedly said he had heard that the 91st (Mai Mai) and 36th (unknown) Brigades intended to advance on Masisi, and added that General Buki (Army Chief of Staff) had told him that if the ex-ANC advanced on Walikale, it would be attacked by aerial bombing. (Note: Unsure if FARDC has capacity to conduct aerial bombing operations. End note.)

¶5. (SBU) On December 29, MONUC confirmed that Mai Mai and ex-ANC from the 11th Brigade killed civilians and committed other human rights violations when ex-ANC soldiers withdrew from areas near Walikale town during mid-December. Mai Mai from the 91st Brigade have controlled Walikale town since December 18. Mai Mai soldiers executed three civilians (one Rwandan, one Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese, and one Mushi), and arrested and executed six ex-ANC soldiers in Walikale territory. Ex-ANC soldiers from the 11th Brigade also killed four civilians and one soldier in the area of Kilambo, and kidnapped dozens of civilians from Mubi, Walikale town, Murakato and Tuterro who were forced to carry looted goods towards Masisi territory.

Nyabiondo--Masisi Territory

¶6. (C) On December 30, MONUC poloff reported that there were ongoing clashes between FARDC (mostly believed to be Mai Mai) and ex-ANC troops in the area of Kibua (between Nyabiondo and Masisi). On December 29, Radio Okapi reported that Nyabiondo was under the control of soldiers from the ex-ANC's 12th Brigade after fighting between the ex-ANC and Mai Mai from December 18-20. Up to 100 civilians were killed, a large number of civilians were displaced, and a church was reportedly attacked during a service. Reportedly, Mai Mai have been pushed about 15km north of Nyabiondo towards Lushebero. During the week of December 27, a MONUC team

visited Masisi and found the area between Goma and Masisi mostly calm. The team, however, saw the local administrator in Masisi distribute arms to Rwandophone civilians, and received reports that civilians had been killed. MONUC has also received reports that ex-ANC troops from the 12th Brigade are traveling from Kanyabayonga towards Kibua.

Buramba--Rutshuru Territory

17. (C) On December 30, an international NGO worker told poloff that at least 16 civilians were killed in mid-December by ex-ANC soldiers in Buramba (100 km northeast of Goma). The ex-ANC soldiers reportedly attacked the village in retaliation for the death of two ex-ANC soldiers. They forced all civilians to leave the village, and would not let anyone return for about 10 days, during which time they systematically looted homes. Two civilians who attempted to return were reportedly shot and killed.

Humanitarian Corridor Opens

18. (SBU) On December 30, OFDA officer told poloff that a humanitarian convoy reached Kayna (15km north of Kanyabayonga) on December 29, and the Lubero-Goma road was open to humanitarian trucks but not to commercial truck traffic.

Comment

19. (C) Although the area north of Kanyabayonga has quieted and humanitarian relief efforts are underway, fighting and troop movements continue in parts of North Kivu that used to be under RCD/G control--notably Rutshuru and Masisi. Although the Kanyabayonga cease-fire is a positive development, the real possibility of an ex-ANC/FARDC showdown is not over. At this point, any number of scenarios are possible, including the possibility that the ex-ANC is interested in re-asserting military control over part of its previous zone of influence in North Kivu-- notably the area from Goma north to Kanyabayonga, south to Kalehe, west to Walikale, and Masisi and Rutshuru territories. These contiguous areas have high concentrations of Rwandophones and local administrators loyal to the ex-ANC. It appears that ex-ANC and RCD/G hardliners have decided to focus on controlling this territory.

110. (U) Bujumbura minimize considered.
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